

Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting  
Chocoday Township Fire Hall Training Room  
April 5, 2017  
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Committee members and Attendees:

Attendees for the April 5, 2017 meeting are identified on Attachment #1

Agenda:

See Attachment #2.

Minutes

Meeting minutes were recorded by George Madison. The minutes of each LSCFAC are posted on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website

([http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-65134\\_65139\\_65169---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-65134_65139_65169---,00.html)).

Intro:

Mylan Koski is the elected Chair of the Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee (LSCFAC) and Mylan's work duties have made it difficult for him to facilitate committee meetings. Mylan was not present at this meeting but asked (prior to the meeting) that if any other committee members would like to serve as Chair, he would relinquish his post. The question was presented to all committee members to see if anybody would like to serve as Chair. There were no volunteers at this time. Members were told to continue to give the Chair posting more thought and to contact Phil if they desired to fill this position.

Meeting agenda:

- Committee Business:

Committee members reviewed the 2016 LSCFAC meeting minutes and there were no suggestions for edits, therefore the attendees recommended approval of April 2016 meeting minutes which had support of all.
- Roundtable Stakeholder Summary:
  - Copper Country Chapter Trout Unlimited, represented by Travis White. This organization consists of 115 members with projects that include the Pilgrim River Watershed Conservation Easement Project (1,300 acres) as well as other projects and programs.
  - Sand Point Charter, represented by Captain Brian Helminen. Brian introduced himself and said that he was here to listen and learn about the Advisory Committee. He also expressed his desire to join the committee as a member.
  - Michigan DNR Marquette and Thompson State Fish Hatchery, represented by Mr. Jan VanAmberg. Jan reported that fish stocking has begun with regular loads of fish heading out of both hatcheries for destinations in lower Michigan. Jan also talked about Governor Snyder's 2016 budget outlay for improvements to the Little Manistee weir and for the Thompson hatchery, through which walleye and muskellunge rearing ponds will be developed at Thompson.

- Isle Royale Boaters Association, represented by Rodney Markham. Rodney spoke of efforts to preserve dock usage and boating around Isle Royale. This group started about 20 years ago and they regularly help National Park Service staff with projects on the island.
- Copper Country Walleye Association, represented by Ross Rinkinen. This organization is working to help bring back the walleye fishery in Portage and Torch Lakes of Houghton County. They also host a VFW kids fishing tournament in February and in July.
- Upper Peninsula Sportsman Alliance, represented by Dave Westerberg and Dale McNamee. No updates were provided other than comments about the US District Court declared moratorium on depredation of cormorants.
- Fred Waara Chapter Trout Unlimited, represented by Jim Cantrill. This organization covers a central Upper Peninsula service area, but also is working with the Iron County Watershed Coalition with projects on Cooks Run brush bundles along with skyboom clean-outs on the Paint River. They have a membership of approximately 300 people. The chapter has concerns about the 10-daily bag brook trout regulation proposal.
- South Shore Fishing Association, represented by Ken Ohman. This organization has a membership of approximately 270 people and they work to preserve watersheds and sport fishing along the south shore of Lake Superior. The group sponsors a summer kids fishing day as well as an early fall veterans fishing day. The club is concerned about impacts to the Chocoma River from the flood damage of July 2016, and they are also concerned about the cessation of Chinook salmon stocking in Lake Superior.
- Black River Harbor Boating Club, represented by Dan Talkowski. Dan reports that they have a good fishery for Coho and Lake Trout in western Lake Superior, and they are seeing heavy tribal fishing pressure in their waters. They have concerns about cessation of Chinook and brown trout stocking at Black River Harbor, although it was pointed out to Dan that they will be getting annual allocations of steelhead as well as periodic allocations of fall fingerling brown trout.
- Central Upper Peninsula Sport Fishing Association, represented by Larry Argall. This group is working to establish a memorial bench for former Association president Ron Laitinen, to be placed at the Big Eric's Campground. This memorial bench will be placed in a manner to overlook the Huron River in northern Baraga County. Ron was an active member of the club as well as a well-respected angler who adopted the Huron River as a place of special attention for both fishing and for habitat protection. On another comment, Larry Argall mentioned that the Association would like to revisit the prohibition of a boat launch at the Little Presque Isle Natural Area, located on Lake Superior just north of the City of Marquette. Lastly, the Association disagrees with the cessation of Chinook stocking in Lake Superior.
- Ottawa Sportsmen's Club, represented by Russ Weisinger. This club would like to see continued stocking of splake in Keweenaw Bay. Russ commented that the splake fishing has been very good in Keweenaw Bay and continued stocking of splake will keep this fishery strong.
- Keweenaw Splake Anglers, represented by Tim Gasperich. This group is appreciative of splake stocking in Copper Harbor and would like to be sure that continued stocking will occur. The group helps out with a kid's fishing day at the Swedetown Pond located in the town of Calumet.

- Michigan Sea Grant, represented by Ron Kinnunen. Ron is working to address aquatic invasive species prevention through commerce and through a bait industry review that focuses on the prevention of invasives and VHS transmission. Ron will be working with the Michigan DNR to set up a Lake Superior Fisheries Workshop which will be held on the evening of May 24<sup>th</sup> at the Chocolay Township Hall.
- Alger County Fish and Game Alliance, represented by Doug Scheuneman. This group was established in 2002 after the 1836 Great Lake Consent Agreement with the tribes. They donated money to the US Forest Service in 2007 for improvements to the Lake Superior boating access site at the Brownstone area of Au Train, however recent erosion deterioration at this site necessitates that more work needs to be done to render this site usable. The Au Train boat launch is currently closed, which leaves no boating access to Au Train Bay. This group also donated money for an Alger County Sheriff's Department hovercraft, and received a grant for the construction of a fishing pier at the mouth of the Anna River in Munising Bay. Doug mentioned that the steelhead stocking in the Anna River has been working well and recommends that the annual stocking be continued. Unfortunately for this club, membership participation has been dwindling and there are no new people to take over running this organization. Because of the declining participation in this club, the Alliance will close down in June 2017.
- Michigan DNR Law Enforcement Division, represented by Skip Hagy, Marv Gerlach, and Shannon VanPatten. These three conservation officers introduced themselves and did not have any round-table reports.
- Michigan DNR-Fisheries Tribal Coordination Unit, represented by Dave Caroffino. Dave said he will defer his round-table update until his agenda presentation.
- Michigan DNR-Fisheries Eastern Lake Superior Management Unit, represented by Cory Kovacs. Cory gave an update of Unit activities and activities with his role as acting Lake Superior Units Manager.
- Committee Requested Topics:
  - Isle Royale lake trout bag limit: There is a request to review the opportunity to increase the daily lake trout bag limit at Isle Royale from 3 fish to 5 fish. Fishing pressure is very light off the waters of the island so an increased harvest of lake trout will not diminish the population of fish in this area. The National Park Service allows only two charter fisheries to operate in the nearshore waters with one charter fishing the north side of the island and the second charter fishing the south side of the island. It was noted that this topic needs to be reviewed with the National Park Service, therefore a timeline for a regulation change would be best lined up for 2020.
  - Status of the proposed Lake Superior Keweenaw National Marine Sanctuary: According to the National Marine Sanctuary website, the Keweenaw did not appear in any of the news/press releases, is not listed as a designation in progress, is not under review, has not been declined, and has not been withdrawn. So basically, there's been no action or progress on this. The Office of the Great Lakes was consulted and to their knowledge this all conclusion was confirmed, adding that there's opposition from the Bay Mills tribe regarding a proposed sanctuary site at Whitefish Point.
  - History of fish stocking in Lake Superior: Committee members reviewed a handout that presented graphs showing the historic stocking of trout and salmonids in Lake

Superior, viewed as snapshots from 1985, 1995, 2005, and 2015. For comparative reference, the corresponding sport harvests were presented on the same graphs for these fishes. The graphs illustrated how stocking of Chinook and Brown Trout, in particular, became far less effective in terms of recreational harvest per fish stocked after the 1980s. Schneeberger's interpretation is that this was caused by the rebounding of lake trout populations that became self-sustaining during the 1990s. Lake trout became re-established as the dominant native predator which was best adapted to the available prey species in the lake.

- Michigan DNR Law Division, Great Lakes Enforcement Unit Update:

The Great Lakes Enforcement Unit staff consists of six personnel for the entire state, three of whom are eligible to retire at any time. The unit currently has four patrol vessels. Over the past 10 years, staff from this section of Law Division have been redirecting their work on aquatic invasive species surveillance and enforcement. Comparatively over the last 10 years, vessel hours are down 370% while invasive species inspections, education and complaints are up by 221% and tribal fishing effort is up considerably. Statewide, they have conducted approximately 500 inspections of organisms in trade, pet stores, live food markets, and live bait. Additional investigations of red swamp crayfish have been conducted in Asian food markets. Monies garnered from 2017 -2018 grant funding will allow the unit to put a more directed focus on the following themes: state commercial fishing; tribal fishing; bait industry surveillance; Bays de Noc patrols; and a rewrite of the state commercial fishing statute. For 2017 the unit has a funding request for adding 10 additional positions.

There was a brief update of the federal enforcement of an illegal commercial fishing operation that was occurring in L'Anse. Fish marketed in this sting included walleye, whitefish, lake sturgeon, which were commercially caught and marketed by both native and non-native fishers. These fishers were using false documents to broker and ship their catches. While most of the commercially caught fish were netted in Keweenaw Bay and western Lake Superior, there were also a large number of walleye that were harvested from Little Bay de Noc. The arrest case has recently entered prosecution phase of the investigation and will include charges on two tribal fishers. One wholesaler has already been convicted and other wholesalers are yet to be charged.

The commercial fishing statute is undergoing a rewrite which will bring this law up to date from when it was originally written in the 1920s. Since its origin, the statute has had minor modifications in the 1970s, however in its current state the statute is confusing and difficult to enforce. The rewrite will need to go through the legislative approval process before it becomes final. There are two parts of stakeholder discomfort of the rewrite: stakeholders feel they should have been involved earlier in the rewrite, and there is concern about "by-catch" allowance of walleye and lake trout (5 lbs per net for up to 20 nets with a cap of 100 lbs per day).

- Lake Trout Mortality Study:

A handout was provided to meeting attendees presenting various talking points of the recent Michigan DNR-Fisheries research study on hooking mortality of lake trout. This

project concluded that hooking mortality of lake trout is approximately 41% which is significantly higher than the 15% mortality rate estimated from a previous study. The more recent work shows that mortality rates go up with increasing surface water temperatures. This new higher mortality rate estimate affects Total Allowable Catch calculations for both tribal commercial fishers and state licensed anglers in 1836 treaty-ceded waters.

- 10-Brook Trout Bag Limit NRC Resolution:  
A short summary was provided regarding the 5-fish versus 10-fish brook trout daily possession limit study that was intended to run through the end of 2017. At the December 2016 Natural Resources Commission meeting, the Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee passed a resolution to adopt a 10-brook trout daily possession limit regulation for the majority of Upper Peninsula Type 1 rivers. Exceptions which would remain under a 5-fish bag regulation would possibly be allowed for rivers recommended by staff or stakeholders. A handout was provided showing a list and a map of the streams currently proposed to be excluded from the 10-fish bag regulation. There was discussion about what streams should or should not be on the list and some committee member may choose to provide further input directly to the NRC.
- 2020 Consent Decree for 1836 Great Lakes Waters:  
Meeting attendees received an update on the status of planning for the next Consent Decree between the State of Michigan and the Native American tribes for Great Lakes waters of the 1836 ceded territory of Michigan. The State has been working to collect stakeholder input, collect tribal input, and to begin broader discussions with the tribes. Food web changes in the lower Great Lakes may be an issue that can complicate catch quota allocation recommendations.
- Chinook Salmon Fishery:  
There was group discussion reminding everybody about the rationale and science behind the decision to discontinue Chinook salmon stocking in Lake Superior. This topic was discussed at the April 6, 2016 Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee spring meeting with general acceptance. The return rate of stocked Chinook was so low and recruitment of wild fish was so high, stocking was demonstrated to be ineffective and not a prudent use of license dollars. A check of opinion of all attendees at this current meeting again resulted in general acceptance of the decision to stop stocking. The Lake Superior Chinook fishery will continue to be monitored to ensure its viability into the future.
- Michigan DNR Fisheries Division Strategic Plan:  
Meeting attendees were presented with a summary of the 2012 Division strategic plan, with a review of some of the goals, strategies, and objectives. A new strategic plan will be in the works for 2018, with an opportunity this year to provide input on the. The current 2012 – 2017 plan entitled "Charting the Course: Fisheries Division's Framework for Managing Aquatic Resources," can be downloaded from the following website:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/fshstrtpln\\_513848\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/fshstrtpln_513848_7.pdf)
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission Meeting Highlights:  
Highlights of the recent Great Lakes Fishery Commission meeting in Ypsilanti were summarized. Topics of interest included the status of sea lamprey abundance in Lake

Superior (populations of adults are above target numbers, and wounding rates per 100 trout are up from recent years). Also for Lake Superior, the forage base is still very low, but may be just a bit higher than 2015.

- Wrap-up:  
There was general discussion by all.
- Next meetings:
  - October 4, 2017 (if emerging issues warrant having a meeting)
  - April 4, 2018

Attachment 1

Committee meeting attendees

Name	Representing
Larry Argall	Central Upper Peninsula Sportfishing Association
Jim Cantrill	Fred Waara Chapter Trout Unlimited
Dave Caroffino	MDNR Fisheries
Tim Gasperich	Keweenaw Splake Anglers
Marvin Gerlach	MDNR Law Enforcement
Skip Hagy	MDNR Law Enforcement
Brian Helminen	Sand Point Charter
Ron Kinnunen	Michigan Sea Grant
Cory Kovacs	MDNR Fisheries
George Madison	MDNR Fisheries
Rod Markham	Isle Royale Boaters Association
Dale McNamee	Upper Peninsula Sportsman's Alliance
Ken Ohman	South Shore Fishing Association
Ross Rinkinen	Copper Country Walleye Association
Doug Scheuneman	Alger County Fish & Game Sports Alliance
Phil Schneeberger	MDNR Fisheries
Dan Talkowski	Black River Harbor Boating Club
Jan VanAmberg	MDNR Fisheries
Shannon VanPatten	MDNR Law Enforcement
Russ Weisinger	Ottawa Sportsmens Club
Charles Westerberg	Upper Peninsula Sportsman's Alliance
Travis White	Copper Country TU; Keweenaw Charters

Attachment 2  
Meeting agenda



### Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

A citizen-based committee charged to review and provide input and advice relative to fishery goals, objectives and management plans for Lake Superior. Members assist Fisheries Division in charting the future course of fisheries management by providing voice to and for the diversity of citizens' interests in the Lake Superior basin.

Mylan Koski, Chair

Alger County  
Fish and Game Alliance

Bay Mills Indian Community

Central Upper Peninsula  
Sport Fishing Association

Copper Country Trout  
Unlimited

DNR Fisheries Division

DNR Law Enforcement  
Division

Fisher Price Charters

Fred Waara Chapter Trout  
Unlimited

Grand Marais Sportmans  
Club

Keweenaw Splake Anglers

Lake Superior Advisor

Lake Superior State  
University Aquatic  
Research Laboratory

Michigan Sea Grant

Michigan United  
Conservation Clubs

Office of the Great Lakes

South Shore Fishing  
Association

Thill's Fish House, Inc.

Upper Peninsula  
Sportsman Alliance

Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee spring meeting,  
April 5, 2017, Chocoley Firehall Training Room, 10am-3pm

#### Meeting agenda

- Committee business
  - Review/approval of 2016 meeting minutes
  - Committee Chair
- Roundtable: committee member input to summarize the past year and bring up any questions, issues, or areas of interest
- Committee requested topics
  - Lake Trout bag limit on Isle Royale
  - National Marine Sanctuary status
  - History of state fish stocking in Lake Superior
- Updates:
  - Law Enforcement Division
    - 2016 in review
    - Federal sting operation
  - Fisheries Division
    - Commercial fisheries statute re-write
    - Lake trout hooking mortality study results/implications
    - 10-Brook Trout bag limit regulation/NRC resolution
    - 2020 Consent Decree
    - Chinook Salmon fishery
    - Division's new strategic plan – status/timeline
    - Cormorants
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission meeting highlights
- ❖ Documents sent prior to the meeting for review
  - 2016 meeting minutes
  - 2016 Creel Survey Results
  - 2016 Commercial fisheries statistics
  - 2017 Fish stocking prescriptions